

## One more time by Ihni

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**Summary:** Exploring the parallels between the scene where Neil makes Billy repeat "Yes sir", and the one where Max makes him repeat "I understand".

## One more time

He backs me into a wall  
I try not to move at all  
Hold my breath (my stomach's churning)  
There's a slap; my face is burning

I am still, my throat is bared  
(My heart's beating fast, *I'm scared*)  
He is pointing at me, "Mister,  
You'll go out and find your sister"

And like any altercation  
It ends with humiliation:  
"Ain't that right?" His voice is rough  
(confirming *once* won't be enough)

"Yes sir", I say, filled with fear  
He leans closer, taps his ear  
"Sorry, son, I couldn't hear you"  
"Yes sir!" (I don't *want to* fear you)

He leaves, and I breathe again  
(*Do not* cry, ignore the pain)  
Slaps and punches, shoves and kicks  
Nothing like that ever sticks

But for it to hurt *inside*  
He knows to attack my pride:  
Makes me sorry for my crime  
Makes me say it *one more time*

(It's enough to make me cry  
Make me wish that I would die  
Helplessness is in my soul;  
there's nothing I can control)

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Later on, I'm on the floor  
Lost again (who's keeping score?)

There's a bat in Max's hands  
And a loud crack when it lands

I have scared her; she'll repay it  
"Say you understand! Just say it!"  
I croak out "I understand"  
But that's not all she has planned:

"What?!" she yells (*don't make me do it*)  
(Twice today, I won't live through it)  
I am punished, most sublime  
As I say it *one more time*

(As I black out, it's my prayer  
That I will *stay unaware*;  
Not wake up and feel this pain  
Never feel disgrace again)